THE

NATURE, NECESSITY, USE,

AND

ADVANTAGE

OF

PUBLICK *and* PRIVATE PRAYER.

A

POEM.

Most Humbly presented to

The Lady *Trumbal.*

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR. M.DCC.XXIII.

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The Nature, Neceſſity, Uſe, and Advantage of Publick *and* Private Prayer.

A

POEM.

Prayer! Thou Vehicle of Words, that ſhew
What Mortals to their great Creator owe;
Mortals whoſe Souls, by thy Aſſiſtance, riſe
From Bodily Confinement to the Skies;

And ſpeak our Wants and our Deſires of Aid
To him that Heav'n, Earth, Air, and Sea, has made,
And the whole Globe's Expanſe from its Foundation laid:
Be thou my Theme, Be thou my daily Song,
Morning, and Noon, and Night to thee belong;
Each Hour, each Minute, ev'ry Point of Time
Bid us in Thought Heav'n's ſteep Aſcent to climb,
In devout Accents piouſly to ſoar,
And Mercy at the Throne of Grace implore;
Since 'tis from thy prevailing Force above,
We ſublunary Beings live and move,
And taſte the ſweet Effects of the Almighty's Love.
What Bleſſings by thy Means our Wiſhes crown!
What Tokens of Divine Support come down,
When thou invok'ſt the Sacred Three in One!
To thee, the Father lends a gracious Ear,
And bows the ſtarry Orbs thy Plaints to hear:

To thee, the Son, whoſe Interceſſion ſtill
Employs himſelf in deprecating Ill,
In putting by the Vengeance that's our Due,
As we are born in Sin, and Sin purſue:
His mediatorial Efficacy lends,
And to his Sire thy Sacrifice commends:
To thee, the Holy Ghoſt, th' Eternal Word,
Of the cœleſtial Trine the laſt and Third,
That breathes all Spirit, and all Bliſs conveys,
Jointly, with their communicated Rays,
Like three vaſt Orbs of Light in one continu'd Blaze;
In Pity to thy Cries his Comforts deigns
To ſtrengthen Penitence, when it complains.

If then thine In'treſt, and thy Pow'r be ſuch,
As can Omnipotence with Mercy touch,
Who can ſeek Heav'n too oft? Who *pray* too much?
Glad was I, cries the PSALMIST, *When they ſaid,*
Let our Approaches to God's Houſe be made:

O

O Lord of Hoſts, how amiable's thy Dome!
How my Soul longs, yea, faints therein to come;
To dwell within thy Courts, thy bleſs'd Abode,
My Heart and Fleſh cries for the Living God:
For one Day in thy Courts, ſays he, *to dwell,*
A thouſand Days of Abſence dyes excel:
Of my God's Houſe I'd rather keep the Door,
Than live in Wickedneſs's Tents with Store
Of Wealth, which makes its rich Poſſeſſor poor.
ANNA, *that had of Propheſy the Gift,*
Departed not, nor e'er the Temple left;
But with her Faſting and her Pray'rs diſplay'd
The Service Night and Day to God ſhe pay'd.
From Holy Writ more Inſtances are brought,
CHRIST *himſelf daily in the Temple taught.*
O God! Thou art my God, King DAVID cries,
Early will I in Search of thee ariſe:

My

My Soul's a-thirſt, and each corporeal Part
Longs after thee, like to the panting Hart
In a dry Land, where is no Water found,
Where all a Deſart is, and barren Ground:
To ſee thy Glory, and thy Power ſurvey,
As I have ſeen thee, where I us'd to pray,
Within thy Sanctuary Night and Day.
Juſtly from hence we may this Inf'rence draw,
That with the Eyes of Faith his God he ſaw,
As on his Knees he offer'd up his Vows,
And paid the Sacrifice which God allows;
A broken Spirit, and a contrite Breaſt,
Which only can the Moſt High's Wrath arreſt,
And ſtop the Thunder rolling from that Hand,
That o'er the Univerſe does bear Command:
And ſo may all God's faithful People too
The Deity within the Scripture view;

They see him by his Countenance's Light,
Which he lifts up there, manifest to Sight;
They see him in full Glory shining forth,
And in his Goodness to the fruitful Earth,
In Answer to the *Prayers* such Suppliants make,
And *Praises*, which he in Thanksgivings take,
Sent up as rich Oblations in his Name,
Whose Promise is to be *amidst of them*,
And whatsoever they shall ask, to grant,
To those that in his Name Protection want.

Hail, therefore, O replete with awful Zeal!
Hail, Ardency of Thought, good Christians feel!
That, like *Elijah's* fiery Chariot, bears
Heav'nward Mankind, oppress'd with human Cares,
And wafts the Soul, repentant of its Wrongs,
To join in Chorus with Angelick Songs,

That round the Seat of Glory tuneful prove:
Great are the Juſts Rewards, and great their Love!
As they their Voice to their Redeemer raiſe,
And ſhew that the Reſult of *Pray'r* is *Praiſe*.

What Arguments from hence are fairly brought,
To make appear that we by *Pray'r* are taught
T'acknowledge our Dependance upon God,
And Dread of his Offence-correcting Rod?

Add to theſe, Benefits that more accrue:
Hence 'tis that Heav'n's Protection is our Due;
That we of Right its Heritage may claim,
And of its Children wear the glorious Name;
Since in Diſcharge of this our Duty 'tis plain
This Title as Heav'n's Denizons we gain.

Nor can a leſs Reward our Hopes ſucceed,
Such Services ſhould have no leſs a Mede:

Eſpecially

Eſpecially, ſince he that does enjoin
Their ſtrict Diſcharge, ſays, *Ye are truly mine,*
That are obſervant of the Will Divine.
O thou Preſerver of thy Creature Man!
Whoſe Length of Life's extended to a Span,
Compar'd to the unbounded Tracts of Time,
Of thy eternal Round of Years ſublime:
What is his Duſt? What is his mould'ring Clay,
Thou doſt with Tenderneſs of Mind ſurvey?
Or what's his Son, who's from Corruption rear'd,
That thou doſt bear him in ſo great Regard;
When to the Worm he has a Brother's Kin,
And from his Parent Earth does riſe in Sin?
'Tis by thy Grace his worthleſs Mould's refin'd,
Thy Spirit, he invigorates his Kind,
Preſſes to mount aloft from Pole to Pole,
Wing'd with Alacrity and Warmth of Soul,
In his Salvation's Race to reach the joyful Goal.

Since

Since then Devotion's Excellence and Uſe
Were held in high Eſteem among the *Jews*,
Who were enjoin'd to ſacrifice and *pray*
In the moſt ſolemn Manner twice a Day;
And of this Duty they were kept in Awe,
Both by *Levitical* and *Moral* Law.
Since *Chriſtians* are held bound in ſtricteſt Ties,
To offer up this verbal Sacrifice;
Not only taught by *CHRIST* himſelf, who left
A Copy of this neceſſary Gift.
Since from the Apoſtles Practice we are told,
God's Worſhip was rever'd in Times of Old;
As Primitive Saints, Martyrs, and Confeſſors,
Humbled themſelves, as the moſt vile Tranſgreſſors,
In *Pray'r* pour'd out their Souls in God's High Place,
And proſtrate fell with penitential Face,
T'avert impending Storms from *Adam*'s ſinful Race.

Since *Turks* and *Jews* in Judgment will arise
Against him that *Pray'rs* Usefulness denies;
Since the Advantages of *Pray'r* display
The Pleasure that's in Heav'n, when-e'er we pray,
Heav'n, that then darts a beamick Ray;
Since we are promis'd in God's Holy Word,
Whate'er the Faithful ask for, shall be heard,
And Two-fold on our Orations descend,
From him that has th'inspir'd Writings penn'd;
Who cannot lie, and who's pronounc'd us blest
In every just Petition or Request,
Whether in publick or in private made,
Certain of kind Returns from his paternal Aid.
Since, in a Word, from hence may take their Date,
Signal Advantages to *Church* and *State*;
If too great Provocations are not giv'n,
By National Offences, against Heav'n:

And

And ev'n in ſuch an Epidemick Caſe
Some Inſtances are ſhewn of ſpecial Grace
To Men, that, in Particulars devout,
Are for divine Acceptance ſingled out;
While all their Paths are Paths of Joy and Peace,
The Pledges of their moſt aſſur'd Increaſe;
Vain's our Excuſe, and friv'lous our Pretence
For this Neglect of gracious Providence,
If we for its Protection, void of Care,
Morning or Noon, Ev'ning or Night, forbear
To give ourſelves in Holocauſts of *Pray'r*:
Or when we, with his Diſpenſations ſtor'd,
Receive thoſe Bleſſings, from his Hand implor'd,
Neglect the Tribute of our Thanks to pay,
And kneel not down to *Praiſe*, who kneel'd to *Pray*.

F I N I S.

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And kneel not down to Him, who kneel'd to Pray.

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